

**Remarks**

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks.

Applicants request entry of the amendments to the claims, as the claims place the application in clear condition for allowance or alternatively place the claims in better form for appeal. Specifically, the independent claims are amended to recite features that are not disclosed or rendered obvious by the references of record in the application. The new independent claim is allowable for reasons similar to those of the other independent claims. Further, a corresponding number of claims are canceled.

Claims 1-20, 22-27 and 29 are pending. Claims 1, 20 and 22 are amended, claim 28 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and new independent claim 29 is added. Support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and therefore no new matter is added.

In the Office Action claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,607,938 to Hosoi et al. (Hosoi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,708,939 to Oikawa et al. (Oikawa). Claims 20, 22, 23 and 26-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,597,884 to Miyaguchi et al. (Miyaguchi) in view of Hosoi and Oikawa. Claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyaguchi, Hosoi and Oikawa, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,934,256 to Isonaka et al. It is requested that the rejections of the claims be withdrawn, and the claims allowed, for the following reasons.

The present invention, as recited in independent claim 1, is directed to a toner supply device for supplying toner to a surface of an electrostatic transport member which conveys the toner to a developing position facing a latent image carrying member and develops a

latent image on the latent image carrying member by the toner. The independent claim further recites a first agitating member configured to discharge the toner through a mesh to the electrostatic transport member, and a second agitating member configured to convey toner, which was previously delivered to the developing position and not used to develop the latent image, to be mixed with other toner.

In the present invention the toner is discharged from a mixture of toner and friction facilitation material to the electrostatic transport member by the first agitating member, an example of which is the transporting screw 432 shown in Figure 61. A portion of the toner is used to develop the latent image (i.e., to form the toner image) on the latent image carrying member. However, the portion of the toner that is not used to form the toner image is not caused to remain at the developing position adjacent the latent image carrying member. Rather, the unused toner is transported back to the second agitating member, an example of which is the transporting screw 431. The second agitating member then conveys this unused toner to a position where the unused toner is mixed into the mixture of toner and friction facilitating material. The first agitating member continues to discharge toner from the mixture of toner and friction facilitating material to the electrostatic transport material. Thus, by this arrangement, the unused toner having unknown characteristics is prevented from remaining at the developing position adjacent the latent image carrying member and is prevented from being used to develop subsequent latent images. Rather, through the use of the first and second agitating members, homogenous toner is used to develop each of the latent images on the latent image carrying member.

It is submitted that none of Hosoi, Oikawa and Miyaguchi, whether taken alone or in combination, discloses or renders obvious the claimed features of a first agitating member configured to discharge toner to an electrostatic transport member, and a second agitating

member configured to convey toner, which was previously delivered to the developing position and not used to develop the latent image, to be mixed with other toner, as recited in independent claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that a combination of Hosoi, Oikawa and Miyaguchi do not provide the above discussed advantages of preventing unused toner having unknown characteristics from being used to develop subsequent latent images.

For these reasons, it is requested that the rejection of independent claim 1 be withdrawn, and that independent claim 1 be allowed.

Independent claims 20, 22 and 29 are allowable for reasons similar to those of independent claim 1. The allowance of independent claims 20, 22 and 29 is therefore requested.

Claims 2-19 and 23-27 are allowable for the same reasons as independent claims 1 and 22 from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, the allowance of dependent claims 2-19 and 23-27 is requested.

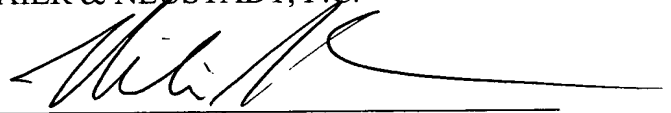
Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Application No. 10/805,362  
Reply to Office Action of January 20, 2006

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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